(b) what benefits have been provided to the agricultural labourers under the Social Security Scheme 'Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana–2001'; and

(c) how many labourers have been covered under the scheme so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) According to the provisional estimates of 2001 Census, there are about 10.7 crore agricultural labourers in the country.

(b) The 'Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana-2001' envisages to provide life-cum-accident insurance, money back, pension and superannuation benefits.

(c) According to reports received from the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), 1,73,915 (Provisional) agricultural labourers have been covered under the scheme upto 31.10.2002.

Investment of EPF

1738. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to restructure investment of Employees Provident Fund (EPF) to optimise its earnings;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure the subscribers to continue to get higher return on their money?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) Modification of investment pattern/ guidelines is a continuous process. Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund as a custodian to the funds belonging to workers constantly strives to achieve best possible returns while assuring maximum safety.

Increasing unemployment

1739. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cases of unemployment in the country has increased in the nineties *vis-a-vis* eighties;